

Small Business Administration

§ 142.23

§ 142.17 What is the role of the ALJ?

An ALJ from OHA serves as the Presiding Officer at all hearings, with authority as set forth in § 134.218(b) of this chapter.

§ 142.18 Can the reviewing official or ALJ be disqualified?

(a) A reviewing official or an ALJ may disqualify himself or herself at any time.

(b) Upon motion of any party, the reviewing official or ALJ may be disqualified as follows:

(1) The motion must be supported by an affidavit containing specific facts establishing that personal bias or other reason for disqualification exists, including the time and circumstances of the discovery of such facts;

(2) The motion must be filed promptly after discovery of the grounds for disqualification, or the objection will be deemed waived; and

(3) The party, or representative of record, must certify in writing that the motion is made in good faith.

(c) Once a motion has been filed to disqualify the reviewing official, the ALJ will halt the proceedings until resolving the matter of disqualification. If the ALJ determines that the reviewing official is disqualified, the ALJ will dismiss the complaint without prejudice. If the ALJ disqualifies himself or herself, the case will be promptly reassigned to another ALJ.

§ 142.19 How are issues brought to the attention of the ALJ?

All applications to the ALJ for an order or ruling are made by motion, stating the relief sought, the authority relied upon, and the facts alleged. Procedures for filing motions under this section are governed by § 134.211 of this chapter.

§ 142.20 How are papers served?

Except for service of a complaint or a notice of hearing under §§ 142.11 and 142.14(b) respectively, service of papers must be made as prescribed by § 134.204 of this chapter.

§ 142.21 How will the hearing be conducted and who has the burden of proof?

(a) The ALJ conducts a hearing in order to determine whether a defendant is liable for a civil penalty, assessment, or both and, if so, the appropriate amount of the civil penalty and/or assessment. The hearing will be recorded and transcribed, and the transcript of testimony, exhibits admitted at the hearing, and all papers and requests filed in the proceeding constitute the record for a decision by the ALJ.

(b) SBA must prove a defendant's liability and any aggravating factors by a preponderance of the evidence.

(c) A defendant must prove any affirmative defenses and any mitigating factors by a preponderance of the evidence.

(d) The hearing will be open to the public unless otherwise ordered by the ALJ for good cause shown.

§ 142.22 How is evidence presented at the hearing?

(a) Witnesses at the hearing must testify orally under oath or affirmation unless otherwise ordered by the ALJ. At the discretion of the ALJ, testimony may be admitted in the form of a written statement or deposition, a copy of which must be provided to all other parties, along with the last known address of the witness, in a manner which allows sufficient time for other parties to subpoena the witness for cross-examination at the hearing.

(b) The ALJ determines the admissibility of evidence in accordance with § 134.223 (a) and (b) of this chapter.

§ 142.23 Are there limits on disclosure of documents or discovery?

(a) Upon written request to the reviewing official, the defendant may review all non-privileged, relevant and material documents, records and other material related to the allegations contained in the complaint. After paying SBA a reasonable fee for duplication, the defendant may obtain a copy of the records described.